



HIKING – FOREST SERVICE – ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NATIONAL FOREST – San Juan RANGER DISTRICT - Columbine
Updated: February, 2003



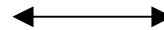
Continental Divide Trail #813 – Sawtooth Mountain to Knife Edge

Length: 21.3 miles (34.8 km.)

Use: Moderate to Light

Recommended Season

Spring Summer Fall Winter



Difficulty: Moderate to Hard

USGS Map (s): Cimarron Peak; Palomino
Mtn; South River Peak

Starting Elevation: 11,800'
½ mile south of Trout Lake

Ending Elevation: 12,400'
Immediately south of Sawtooth Mountain



Recommended Season: Summer

Access: #1: Travel southwest from Creede on Colorado Highway 149 for 7 miles to the junction of Colorado 149 and Forest Development Road #523 (Middle Creek Road), then 9 miles on this road to the Trout Creek Trailhead. Proceed on the Main Trout Creek and West Trout Creek Trail to Trout Lake. The Continental Divide Trail #813 can be seen south of and above Trout Lake, as it traverses the fabled Knife Edge.



Scan of the San Juan National Forest Map

Forest Service Maps and other publications available at the Public Lands Center in the Durango Tech Center, ½ mile west of Durango off of Highway 160 or by calling 970-247-4874. www.sjma.org

Attractions & Considerations : Beautiful views, isolated wild country, elevations approaching 13,000 feet, and spine-tingling climbs along rocky cliffs await the hiker of this trail segment. The hiker who likes to fish will find only one fishable lake within two miles of the trail. Goose Lake not only is good fishing, but has several good camping areas.

Little Goose Lake is a dead lake. Good camping areas with comfortable tree cover are fairly frequent between the Knife Edge and Piedra Pass. From the Pass to Sawtooth Mountain, one may have to wander away from the trail a

short distance to find a flat camping area with tree cover and ready water supply. Hikers usually have this segment of the Continental Divide Trail all to themselves, as not too many people visit this part of the Divide during the summer months. Several trail junctions are not well defined or signed, so be sure to have a U.S.G.S. topographic map to help guide yourself. If you find yourself wandering more than a mile away from the Divide, stop to check your map, to make sure you did not start down one of the ten trails that join with this segment of the Continental Divide Trail.

Narrative: This trail segment begins with a ¼-mile traverse of the cliffs that form the fabled Knife Edge. Crossing the Knife Edge is not as scary as it used to be, as the narrow, rocky trail tread of the past has been “improved” to reduce hazardous conditions. From the Knife Edge to Piedra Pass, the trail will go up and down like a roller coaster. Most of the ups and downs are reasonably short, steep pitches. The trail slopes quite close to the Divide and frequently weaves above and below timberline. From the water diversion ditches at Piedra Pass, the trail makes a rather lengthy, long climb toward South River Peak. From the South River Peak Area to Sawtooth Mountain, the trail will wind along the crest of the Continental Divide, well above timberline. Some of the highest elevations along the trail occur in this segment of trail. Following this section of trail is occasionally difficult in places, as some sections of trail tread can be indistinct.



Fishing Considerations: Goose Lake is good fishing for cutthroat. Please be aware that Little Goose Lake is a dead lake.



Weminuche Wilderness Regulations: Group size is limited to 15 people. A combination of people and livestock must not exceed 25. All livestock feed must be certified weed free. Camping is not allowed within 100 feet of any water source unless the campsite is designated or posted. Do not leave campfires unattended. Outfitters and guides who receive any form of compensation must obtain a special-use permit to operate on public land. Dogs must be leashed or under voice control at all times and must not disturb people or wildlife. Shortcutting switchbacks on trails is prohibited. Disposal of human waste and gray water within 100 feet of any water source is prohibited. Trash must be packed out and properly disposed of. Cutting or damaging live trees is prohibited. **Please check trailhead signs or Forest Service Offices for site-specific camping, campfires, and livestock regulations.**